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ABSTRACT

A random telephone survey was conducted in July 1987 as part of a collaborative effort by the Kentucky School Board Association and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory to discover the public's perceptions about the local school board's role. Survey questions, fielded by trained and supervised interviewers, also addressed public opinions about the quality of Kentucky public schools. The survey represents a cross-section of the state, including five main regions (Appalachia, Bluegrass, Northern Kentucky, Louisville and environs, and Western Kentucky). Interviewees included adults from urban and rural areas, either working or not working, representing a wide range of educational experience, and including parents of school aged children as well as those without children in school. Of the 473 respondents, 54 percent were female and 46 percent were male. Most were lifetime Kentucky residents, and two-thirds lived in rural communities or small towns. Findings show that 70 percent of respondents would like local school boards to have more decision-making influence than at present. A full 75 percent said they had never received any information or communication from their school board; the same number depended on the news media for this information. Also, 48 percent said they had voted in the previous fall's board elections. People's reasons for not voting included not being registered, not being interested, not having children in school, or not having enough information. Among those voting, the 25-40 age group had the highest proportion of school-age children, but were not more likely to have voted than other groups. People over 41 were more likely to vote in school elections, tended to express more trust in their local school boards, and gave their schools a higher grade. One conclusion is that increased parental involvement with schools is necessary. Included are four references and appendices containing the survey instrument, responses, and survey results dissemination data. (MLH)

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KSBA-AEL

Public Opinion About Kentucky School Boards: Results of a Statewide Survey

A Joint Study By

The Kentucky School Boards Association
University of Kentucky Survey Research Center
and
Appalachia Educational Laboratory
Charleston, West Virginia

November 1987

The Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) is located in Charleston, West Virginia. Its mission is to work with the Region's educators in an ongoing R & D-based effort to improve education and educational opportunity. To accomplish this mission AEL works toward:

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- the improvement of curriculum and instruction,
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In a statewide survey on public schools and school boards, most Kentuckians (70 percent) would like to see local school boards have more influence in decisionmaking than they have now. Of those polled, six percent feel school boards should have the same amount of control as they do now, while 14 percent feel local boards should have less influence.

Of those surveyed, 75 percent said they had never received any information or communication from their local school board. Most people (nearly 75 percent) said they get their information about actions of their local school boards from the news media.

According to the survey results, 48 percent said they had voted in school board elections last fall. Among reasons they gave for not voting were: not being registered, not interested, not having children in school, or not having enough information.

Among those voting, the age group (25-40 years) with the highest proportion of school-age children were not more likely to have voted. People over 41 years are more likely to vote in school board elections, according to their self-reports:

Over 65 years	51.3% voted
41-65	63.3% voted
25-40	44.4% voted
24 and under	17.8% voted

Consistent with a Bluegrass State Poll in the Louisville area reported in The Courier Journal in August, the most positive ratings about public schools came from parents with children in public schools and from people without a college education.

In the KSBA poll, there also was a tendency for older respondents to express more trust in their local school boards and to give their local schools a higher grade. Females were more likely to give the schools an "A", while males were more likely to give them a "B".

The random telephone survey was conducted in July 1987 for the Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) by the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center. KSBA and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory (AEL) cosponsored the study as part of a collaborative effort to find out the public's perceptions about the role of the local school board. Survey questions also addressed public opinions about the quality of schools in Kentucky.

The telephone interviewers were trained and supervised. The margin of error for the survey was plus or minus 4.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval. This means that results should not vary more than 4.5 percentage points in 95 out of 100 administrations of the survey.

The survey represents a cross section of the state. The five main regions represented include Appalachia, Bluegrass, Northern Kentucky, Louisville and contiguous counties, and Western Kentucky. Adults (over 18) from urban and rural areas, male and female, working and not working, and with a range of educational experience were interviewed. Parents of school-age children as well as those without children in school were polled. Of the 473 respondents, 54 percent were female and 46 percent were male. Most (70 percent) were lifetime residents of Kentucky. About two-thirds of the respondents live in rural communities or small towns.

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The Kentucky School Boards Association (KSBA) did a general needs assessment of its members in 1985 for long-range planning and identification of any new services needed. One of the top concerns expressed was the need for help in developing local district community relations programs. KSBA members felt that most citizens do not understand the role of school boards. Board members were also interested in knowing what their constituents think about the job Kentucky schools and school boards are doing.

Working with a public relations consultant, KSBA developed and adopted a community relations plan in 1986. The plan is designed to educate the public about the role of school boards and to improve public opinion about school boards. The community relations plan was presented to the KSBA membership in regional meetings (fall 1986). Some thirty-six school boards enrolled in the program that first year. An orientation meeting for those boards was conducted in conjunction with the KSBA Statewide Annual Conference in February 1987.

As part of this long-range effort, KSBA decided to do a statewide survey to find out about perceptions of and current knowledge about school boards. With this information, the community relations program can be tailored to meet the concerns and needs expressed by citizens throughout Kentucky.

The Appalachia Educational Laboratory's (AEL) School Governance and Administration program provided support and technical assistance. The

AEL staff assisted the KSBA Board of Directors in identifying the major topics for questions to be included on a statewide survey. AEL also provided a senior associate, Dr. Bill Braden, to work with the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center in developing the questionnaire, conducting the survey, and analyzing and reporting the data.

Purpose

The purpose of the survey was to find out the public's perceptions about the role of the local school board and the jobs their schools and school boards are doing.

The information will be used to tailor the KSBA's community relations program to meet the needs identified by citizens throughout Kentucky. KSBA further plans to use the survey results in its efforts to keep the public informed about school boards and education issues. In fact, through a planned, statewide release of information about the survey results, KSBA has already begun this process of better educating Kentucky's citizens about school boards. Information from the survey has been made available to local school boards and administrators for their use in planning.

Methodology

The Survey Research Center of the University of Kentucky conducted interviews with 473 residents of Kentucky (aged 18 and over) between July 7 and July 20, 1987. Interviews were conducted by trained personnel working under supervision. A monitoring device was used to ensure that interviews were conducted in accordance with prescribed procedures.

Random-digit dialing was used so that all residential telephone numbers in Kentucky would have an equally likely chance of being called. The error rate for sample estimates for Kentucky is ±4.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval. This means that results should not vary more than 4.5 percentage points in 95 out of 100 administrations of the survey.

Of the eligible respondents for the survey, 22.3 percent refused to be interviewed. Some others were persistently unavailable, out of town for the duration of the survey, or seriously ill. The final completion rate was 60.4 percent. For general population surveys, completion rates of 55 to 65 percent are typical.

SURVEY RESULTS

In this section of the report, responses to the KSBA survey are reported. The results are divided into three major categories: opinions about local school boards, opinions about schools in Kentucky, and demographics. A copy of the survey instrument can be found in Appendix A. The reader should refer to the survey for the exact wording of specific questions.

Local School Boards

Most of the questions on the survey asked people their opinions about local school boards. The results are reported below by question.

Questions 8 and 8a. Less than half (48 percent) report that they voted in the last school board election race. People gave many reasons for not having voted, including the following:

19.2%	not registered to vote
12.0%	not interested
7.7%	no children in school
6.0%	too busy
4.7%	not enough information about the race
40.6%	other
9.8%	don't know

Question 9. People report being satisfied with the job their local school boards are doing. Nearly two-thirds are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. The responses were as follows:

19.5%	very satisfied
48.1%	somewhat satisfied
14.2%	somewhat dissatisfied
8.3%	very dissatisfied
10.0%	don't know

Question 15. In a similar question, people report they have high trust and confidence in their local school boards. They describe their level of trust as follows:

15.0% very high
47.8% high
17.5% low
7.2% very low
1.9% not high, not low
10.6% don't know

Questions 10 and 10a. Twenty-eight percent of Kentuckians report having attended a school board meeting. They gave various reasons for having attended. Of those who had attended, nearly one-third (28.7 percent) named general interest, curiosity, to observe, and to become involved as reasons for having attended a meeting. Another 15 percent attended because of issues of redistricting, school closings, merging, or busing. An additional 15 percent attended because of personnel issues such as hiring, firing, raises, etc.

Question 11. Seventy-five percent of those responding to the survey said they had never received any information or communication from their local school boards.

Question 12. Most people (74.4 percent) learn significant amounts of information about the actions of their local school boards from the news media. Sources of information are listed below, in descending order of importance. (People could answer "Yes" to any or all of the following as sources of information about school boards.)

74.4% the news media
48.1% friends
32.9% teachers
31.8% neighbors
28.1% cable television
27.1% relatives other than own children
26.5% school principal

24.6% school board member
17.3% children
17.2% school superintendent
11.7% school bus driver
8.7% school secretary
5.1% school custodian

Question 14. Most Kentuckians (70 percent) would like to see local school boards have more influence than they now have. Fourteen percent believe local school boards should have less influence; six percent feel it should stay the same; and nearly 10 percent had no opinion. These opinions are consistent with the national trend, according to the 1986 Gallup Poll, in which 57 percent of those polled wanted more influence from the local board.

Question 16. Over half of those polled (59 percent) think school board members should be paid a salary for their services. About 10 percent had no opinion.

Question 17. People believe that school board members have important responsibilities. Given a list of nine school board responsibilities, and asked to rate each as very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important, 90 percent rated all nine as at least somewhat important. (See Table 1.)

Question 19. The survey had two open-ended questions about school boards. When asked what they believe is the best thing about their local school board, people in the survey (N=108) made comments that school board members are doing the best they can, they are nice people, they are concerned, and they try to get things done for schools. (Comments are listed in Appendix B.)

Table 1

Perceived Importance of School Board Responsibilities

Responsibility	Very Imp.	Somewhat Imp.	Not Very Imp.	Not at All Imp.	Don't Know
Keep community informed	85.3	11.7	0.6	0.2	2.1
Maintain relationship with superintendent	80.0	16.3	0.8	0.2	2.5
Evaluate superintendent	76.9	16.6	0.8	0.2	2.5
Tell administrators about community concerns	76.0	18.0	1.7	0.2	4.0
Select superintendent	73.0	19.5	1.7	0.2	4.0
Set learning goals	71.5	21.0	3.6	1.5	2.3
Approve system budget	70.5	22.3	1.5	1.1	4.7
Establish policies	70.4	24.0	1.7	0.6	3.2
Conduct long-range planning	67.4	23.4	4.7	1.7	2.8

Question 20. In response to a question about the worst thing about their board, many people had no answer. Of those who replied to the question, the most frequent answer had to do with members not being qualified and the board being too political (N=63). (See responses in Appendix B.)

Local Schools

Question 4. Most people in the sample (90.3 percent) believe they would feel welcome if they were to visit a local public school. Only 5.5 percent would not feel welcome; 4.2 percent did not know.

Question 5. One-half of the respondents (49.7 percent) reported having visited a school during the previous 12 months. The purpose of their visits were reported as follows:

5.7%	parent organization
5.3%	teacher conference
4.4%	athletic event
3.8%	school-related meeting
0.8%	non-school related meeting
20.7%	other
8.9%	combination of reasons

Question 6. People were asked about ways to improve the quality of education. For each of the following eight items, they were asked if it would be very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important in improving the quality of education in their local community. All eight items were rated by 85.4 percent as at least somewhat important. The items are listed in order of importance, with percentages responding indicated in Table 2.

Question 7. About one-third of the respondents (30.5 percent) would contact the school principal first if they had a question or suggestion about their local public schools. Others would first contact: superintendent (28.6 percent), a school board member (16.3 percent), other (11.9 percent), teacher (5.1 percent), or school secretary (0.2 percent).

Question 13. People believe it is important to have information about their local public schools. For each of six types of information, people answered if it was very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important to know about. Eighty-two percent thought it was at least somewhat important to receive information about all six areas of information. They especially want more information about the school curriculum and local school board decisions. (See Table 3.)

Question 18. The survey had one open-ended question about local schools. In response to the question, "What is the most important thing you think your local schools should be doing that they aren't doing now?", there were many suggestions made. By far, the largest number of comments (N=72) had to do with student academic achievement--broadening the curriculum, demanding more, expecting more, etc. Other categories included hiring better teachers (N=33); helping with problems such as drugs, sex, counseling, etc. (N=32); providing the community with more information (N=29); increasing parent involvement (N=19); and improving student attendance and discipline (N=26). (Comments are listed in Appendix B.)

Table 2

Perceived Importance for Improved Quality of Education

Item	Very Imp.	Somewhat Imp.	Not Very Imp.	Not at All Imp.	Don't Know
Help for students with problems	89.4	8.2	0.2	1.1	1.1
More parent involvement	82.0	14.2	2.1	0.2	1.5
Development of students' critical thinking ability	75.1	18.0	2.1	0.4	4.4
More information on how taxes spent	72.9	22.0	2.5	0.2	2.3
Stricter qualifications for school board members	68.6	19.9	4.7	1.1	5.7
More understanding of role of school board	62.6	29.6	3.4	0.8	3.6
More local decisionmaking	58.4	28.3	5.1	1.5	6.8
More accessible board members	53.7	31.7	4.9	2.5	7.2

Table 3

Perceived Importance of Having Information
About Public Schools

Type of Information	Very Imp.	Somewhat Imp.	Not Very Imp.	Not at All Imp.	Don't Know
School curriculum	70.2	17.5	5.7	1.5	5.1
School board actions	64.1	26.8	3.2	1.3	4.7
School budget	63.3	26.8	6.2	1.7	2.1
Student test scores	58.5	25.6	8.5	1.9	5.5
Adult education programs	56.9	33.5	6.2	0.8	2.5
Teacher salaries	48.1	34.1	12.3	4.0	1.5

Questions 23 and 24. When Kentuckians were asked to grade the schools, parents responded more positively than non-parents.

Table 4

Local Public Schools' Grades, As Perceived
By Parents and Non-Parents

Grade Given School	Public School Parents	Non-Parents
A	33.7	18.8
B	37.6	35.0
C	19.9	23.5
D	6.1	5.8
F	1.7	3.2
Don't Know	1.1	13.7

Demographics

Of the 473 Kentucky residents interviewed, 54 percent were female; 46 percent were male. Interviews were conducted primarily in the afternoon and evening between July 7 and July 20, 1987.

Question 1. Most of the respondents (70 percent) were lifetime residents of the state. All but 7 percent have lived in Kentucky 10 or more years. These data compare favorably to 1980 census data, which report that 79 percent of Kentucky residents were born in the state.

Question 2. Roughly two-thirds of survey respondents live in rural or small town communities. About one-third live in suburban and city areas. Kentucky citizens described their communities in the following way:

14.6% rural area, farm
16.5% rural area, non-farm
35.6% small town
14.2% suburb
18.4% city

Question 3. Respondents live in 81 different counties in the state.

Question 21. A little over half (51 percent) of the respondents have children under the age of 18 living in their households. As is true nationwide, Kentucky families are small. Twenty-three percent have one child, and 19 percent reported having two children.

Question 22. Of those respondents with children, 74 percent attend public school, 8 percent attend private school, and 17 percent are preschoolers.

Question 25. Approximately 60 percent of the sample reported that they work outside the home. Forty-six percent work fulltime; 12 percent work parttime.

Question 26. The type of work respondents do was classified in the following ways:

33.0%	sales, clerical, and other nonmanual
24.3%	manual
18.4%	professional
13.9%	administrative
4.9%	technical
2.1%	farmer
3.3%	other

Question 27. The age of those responding averaged 41.75 years of age.

Question 28. The educational level was reported as follows:

30.1%	did not complete high school (may include some who have earned the GED)
32.8%	high school graduates
19.3%	1-3 years beyond high school
9.6%	college graduate
8.1%	post-graduate work

Question 29. Kentuckians live in traditional households, composed of two adults. When asked "How many people over the age of 18 live in your household?", the responses were:

21.1%	one adult
59.8%	two adults
14.4%	three adults
4.6%	more than three

Question 30. The median total family income before taxes was reported as $21,335.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

Local School Boards

- Consistent with the national 1986 Gallup Poll, Kentuckians would like to see local school boards have more influence in determining the educational programs of local public schools. Nearly 70 percent of those polled wanted more local influence.

- Kentuckians have high trust and confidence in their local school boards. Almost 63 percent said they have high or very high confidence in their local school boards.

- In a related question, 68 percent are satisfied to very satisfied with the job their local school board is doing.

- Of the nine major responsibilities of local school boards, all were ranked as important or very important by over 90 percent of those polled.

- In the last school board elections, 48 percent of those polled reported having voted.

- Of those polled, including parents and non-parents, 28 percent reported that they had attended a school board meeting. Most frequently cited reasons for attending a board meeting were: general interest and desire to get involved, redistricting, school closings, new school openings, and mergers; and personnel issues.

- The highest percentage of those responding (74 percent) get their information about local school board actions from the news media. Other sources of information ranking highest were friends, teachers, neighbors, school principals, relatives, and school board members.

Local Schools

- Seventy-one percent of parents responding gave the public schools an A or B grade. This is higher than results nationally with 56 percent of parents grading the schools with an A or B in the Gallup Poll (1987).

- Among non-parents polled, 54 percent gave the public schools an A or B. Nationally 25 percent gave their local schools an A or B.

- (a) Efforts to identify and help students with personal problems such as drug or alcohol abuse or potential for dropping out of school were cited as the most important item listed for improving the quality of education. Almost 90 percent ranked this item as very important. This Kentucky perception agrees with the national Gallup Poll findings (1987). The biggest problems facing local schools were perceived as use of drugs and lack of discipline.

(b) Ranked next (82 percent) in improving quality of education was involvement of parents.

(c) Seventy-five percent cited a need for more efforts to develop critical thinking and decisionmaking skills in students.

(d) Seventy-three percent said more public information is needed on use of tax dollars for education.

(e) Sixty-three percent said the public needs to know more about the role of school board members. This need is consistent with findings of a national study of school boards by the Institute for Educational Leadership as well as with studies by the National School Boards Association.

- Of six items listed about which those polled would like to receive more information, all were ranked as very important or important. These include in order of importance: school board actions, adult education programs, school budgets, school curriculum, student test scores, and teacher salaries.

- Fifty percent of those polled had visited a public school in the past year. This compares with only 33 percent nationally. The majority of those who had visited a public school were parents of children in public schools.

- If they had a question or suggestion about a local school most of those responding (31 percent) said they would first contact the principal; 29 percent said the superintendent. Third in order of contact were school board members (at 16 percent).

- Ninety percent said they would feel welcome if they visited a local public school.

Demographics

- Slightly more than one-third (37 percent) of the respondents have children in public schools. About half the respondents (51 percent) have children under 18 years of age.

- Most (70 percent) are lifetime residents of Kentucky.

- Approximately two-thirds live in rural or small town areas; one-third are suburban and city dwellers.

- The median age is 41.75 years.

- The median family income is $21,335.

- Slightly more than half (54 percent) of the respondents are female; 46 percent are male.

- About one-third (30 percent) of those responding have not completed high school; another one-third (33 percent) have a high school degree; and 37 percent have attended at least some post-high school or college classes.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTED ACTIONS

Three major findings from this statewide survey are people's beliefs about:

- increased local influence on public schools,
- the need for more information to the public from their school boards, and
- involvement of parents in supporting schools through voting in school board elections.

Local Influence of Public Schools

It is significant that 70 percent of those surveyed would like to see local school boards have more influence in making decisions about public schools. This supports a nationwide survey on school boards released last year by the Institute for Educational Leadership, which found "that the American public strongly supports the concept of local governance of education through the school boards."

Since decisions made about public schools can have an impact on the total community, KSBA believes it is important to involve local citizens in the process through the school board.

Public Information from School Boards

According to the survey results, Kentuckians need more and better communications from their local school boards. Seventy-five percent of those surveyed said they had never received any type of information or communication from their local school boards. Most of them (74 percent) said they get their information about actions of their local school boards from the news media. In a related question, almost 85 percent rated as "very important" the school board's responsibility to keep the community informed.

To help local school boards in these efforts, KSBA has designed a statewide model community relations program. The program offers suggestions for school boards to use in working with the community, the news media, and the schools (including teachers, staff, students, and parents). Sixty-three local school boards have enrolled in the program in its first year of implementation in 1987.

Board members cited community relations as a need in a membership survey two years ago. This survey reinforces that need. Local school boards should not rely on the news media alone to tell their story.

Parent Involvement with Schools and School Boards

Of those adults between the ages of 25-40, only 44.4 percent said they voted in school board elections last fall. Since this is the average age group for parents of school-age children, KSBA wants to address this need identified by the survey.

All of the research available nationally has shown that when parents and communities are involved in the schools, the schools are better as a result.

KSBA has developed a slide-tape presentation on the role and responsibilities of school board members. Last fall, it was presented to 30 community organizations throughout the state, reaching more than 1,000 citizens. The presentation was designed to encourage citizens to learn more about their school board in order to make more informed decisions when voting for school board members.

Prior to school board elections next fall, KSBA will aim this presentation at more parent groups to help interest them in the process.

KSBA has presented the findings of the survey to school board members and school superintendents throughout Kentucky. The Association also plans to make the information available to concerned citizen groups.

KSBA feels that this information will be valuable to various groups interested in improving the public schools in Kentucky. To that end, a press conference was held in November 1987 to release the findings of this study. (See Appendix C for a summary of dissemination efforts to date.)

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Kentucky School Boards Association Survey

KENTUCKY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION SURVEY
UK-SRC
JULY 1987

/___/	/___/___/___/	/___/___/
101	102 103 104	105 106
CARD	ID#	INTERVIEWER#

Hello. My name is _____. I'm calling from the Survey Research Center at the University of Kentucky. This month we're conducting a survey of people randomly selected from across Kentucky regarding education issues. The survey will only take about ten minutes, and we have only a phone number and not any names, so all answers are anonymous.

According to my instructions, I'm to speak to a (man/woman) at this number over the age of eighteen. Would that be you? OR Would you please call (him/her) to the phone?

REPEAT GREETING IF NECESSARY

1. If I have your permission, let me begin by asking about how many years you have lived in Kentucky, or have you lived here all your life?

INTERVIEWER RECORD ACTUAL NUMBER OF YEARS;
IF LESS THAN 1, CODE 00.

90. All my life
98. Don't know
99. Refused

/___/___/
107 108

2. Would you call the community in which you live a rural area, a small town, a suburb, or a city of 50,000 or more?

IF RURAL AREA ASK: Do you live on a farm?

109- 1. Rural area-farm
2. Rural area-nonfarm
3. Small town
4. Suburb
5. City
8. Don't know
9. Refused

3. Could you tell me what county you are currently living in?

INTERVIEWER RECORD ACTUAL COUNTY NAME

_____

/___/___/___/
110 111 112

4. If you were to visit a local public school, do you think you would feel welcome there?

113- 1. Yes
9. Refused

2. No
8. Don't know

4a. Why don't you think you would be welcome?

_____

_____ /___/___/
114 115

5. Have you visited any public school or attended any functions at a Kentucky public school in the last 12 months? (IF YES: What was the purpose of your visit?)

116- 1. No
2. Yes-parent organization
3. Yes-athletic event
4. Yes-voting
5. Yes-teacher conference
6. Yes--non-school related meeting
7. Yes-school related meeting
8. Yes-other_____
9. Combination
0. Don't know/refused

6. There is much talk today about improving the quality of education. How important do you think each of the following items would be to improving the quality of education in your community? Please tell me if you think they would be very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important?

		VERY IMP	SOME-WHAT	NOT VERY	NOT AT ALL	DK	REF
a. First, how about more involvement of parents in schools?	-117	1	2	3	4	8	9
b. More decision making at the local level regarding public schools.	-118	1	2	3	4	8	9
c. How about more efforts to identify and help students with personal problems such as drug or alcohol abuse or a tendency to drop out of school?	-119	1	2	3	4	8	9
d. And what about more accessibility to school board members?	-120	1	2	3	4	8	9
e. More efforts to develop students' ability to think critically and to make informed choices?	-121	1	2	3	4	8	9

		VERY IMP	SOME-WHAT	NOT VERY	NOT AT ALL	DK	REF
f. How about stricter qualifications for school board members?	-122	1	2	3	4	8	9
g. More public information on how tax dollars are spent for education?	-123	1	2	3	4	8	9
h. And more awareness among the public of the role of school board members.	-124	1	2	3	4	8	9

7. If you had a question or suggestion about your local public school, who would you contact first?

125- 1. Superintendent
2. Principal
3. Board member
4. Teacher
5. School secretary
6. Other_____
8. Don't know
9. Refused

There is often some confusion about the role of school board members as compared to the role of the superintendent and staff of a school system. School board members are responsible for placing and setting policy for the school system. The school board also selects and evaluates the school superintendent. School board members do not receive a salary. They are lay citizens.

The school superintendent is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the schools. He or she carries out the policies which are established by the school board. The next few questions are concerned with the school board and its duties.

8. Did you vote in your last school board election race?

126- 1. Yes
8. Don't know
9. Refused
|
V
SKIP TO QS 9

2. No
|
V
8a. Why not?

127- 1. Not enough information about race
2. No children in school
3. Not registered to vote
4. Too busy
5. Not interested
6. Other_____
7. Not asked
8. Don't know
9. Refused

9. How satisfied are you with the job your local school board is doing? Would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

128- 1. Very satisifed
2. Somewhat satisfied
3. Somewhat dissatisfied
4. Very dissatisfied
8. Don't know
9. Refused

10. Have you ever attended a school board meeting?

129- 2. No
8. Don't know
9. Refused
|
V

1. Yes
|
V

10a. For what reason did you last attend a school board meeting?

_____

_____ /___/___/
130 131

11. Have you ever received any information or communication from your local school board?

132- 2. No
8. Don't know
9. Refused
|
V
SKIP TO QS 12

1. Yes
|
V

11a. Do you remember what that information was about?

_____

_____ /___/___/
133 134

12. There are many ways in which people can learn about the actions of local school boards. Please tell me which of the following provide you, YOURSELF, with a significant amount of information about what your local school board is doing.

		YES	NO	NA	DK	REF
a. First, do your children provide you with information about how your local school board is doing?	-135	1	2	7	8	9
b. How about other relatives?	-136	1	2	7	8	9
c. Neighbors?	-137	1	2	7	8	9
d. Friends?	-138	1	2	7	8	9
e. Teachers?	-139	1	2	7	8	9
f. A school secretary?	-140	1	2	7	8	9
g. A school custodian?	-141	1	2	7	8	9
h. A school bus driver?	-142	1	2	7	8	9
i. A school principal?	-143	1	2	7	8	9
j. A school superintendent?	-144	1	2	7	8	9
k. A school board member?	-145	1	2	7	8	9
l. The news media?	-146	1	2	7	8	9
m. Cable television?	-147	1	2	7	8	9

n. Is there any other source of information that is important to you?

_____ /___/___/ (148 149)

97=No answer
98=Don't know
99=Refused

13. What types of information would you like to have about local public schools? Please rate each of the following as things that are very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important to know about.

		VERY IMP	SOME-WHAT	NOT VERY	NOT AT ALL	NA	DK	REF
a. First, the school budget?	-150	1	2	3	4	7	8	9
b. Teacher salaries?	-151	1	2	3	4	7	8	9

		VERY IMP	SOME-WHAT	NOT VERY	NOT AT ALL	NA	DK	REF
c. What about school curriculum?	-152	1	2	3	4	7	8	9
d. Adult education programs?	-153	1	2	3	4	7	8	9
e. How about school board actions?	-154	1	2	3	4	7	8	9
f. And student test scores?	-155	1	2	3	4	7	8	9

14. The federal government, state government and local school boards each have a role in determining the educational program of local public schools. In Kentucky, the state has the ultimate responsibility for the operation and quality of local public schools, but has given authority to local school boards and administrators to carry out these responsibilities. Would you like to see local school boards have more or less influence in determining the educational program of local public schools?

156- 1. More influence
2. Same as now (VOLUNTEERED)
3. Less influence
8. Don't know
9. Refused

15. Would you describe your trust and confidence in your local school board as very high, high, low, or very low?

157- 1. Very high
2. High
3. Low
4. Very low
8. Don't know
9. Refused

16. Do you think school board members should or should not be paid a salary for their services?

158- 1. Should be paid a salary
2. Should NOT be paid a salary
8. Don't know
9. Refused

17. There are a number of activities that school boards are involved in. How important would you rate each of the following school board responsibilities...as very important, somewhat important, not very important, or as not at all important?

		VERY IMP	SOME-WHAT	NOT VERY	NOT AT ALL	NA	DK	REF
a. How about long range planning for the school system?	-159	1	2	3	4	7	8	9
b. And establishing policies by which schools are run?	-160	1	2	3	4	7	8	9
c. Setting learning goals for the school system?	-161	1	2	3	4	7	8	9
d. And what about the selection of new school superintendents?	-162	1	2	3	4	7	8	9
e. Maintaining a working relationship between school boards and school superintendents?	-163	1	2	3	4	7	8	9
f. And the evaluation of the superintendent's performance?	-164	1	2	3	4	7	8	9
g. Approving the school system's budget?	-165	1	2	3	4	7	8	9
h. Telling school administrators what the community's concerns are?	-166	1	2	3	4	7	8	9
i. And keeping the community informed about its schools?	-167	1	2	3	4	7	8	9

18. What is the most important thing you think your local schools should be doing that they aren't doing now?

INTERVIEWER PROBE: Could you tell me a little more about that?

_____ /___/___/
168 169

19. What is the best thing you can think of about your local school board?

_____ /___/___/
170 171

20. What is the worst thing you can think of about your local school board?

_____ /___/___/
172 173

21. How many children under 18 do you have in your household?

INTERVIEWER RECORD ACTUAL NUMBER

/___/ 8=8 or more
174 9=Don't know/refused

IF NO CHILDREN, SKIP TO QS 24

22. Do your children attend a public or private school?

175- 1. Public
2. Private
3. Both
4. Neither-haven't started yet
7. Not asked
5. Neither-dropped-out
8. Don't know
9. Refused

V
SKIP TO QS 24

23. Using a grading system like the one used in many schools, we'd like to know how well the needs of your children are being met in school. Would you give an A, B, C, D, or F to the kind of job your local public schools are doing with your children?

176- 1. A
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. F
7. Not asked
8. Don't know
9. Refused

V
SKIP TO QS 25

24. Even though you do not have children in public school, using a grading system of A, B, C, D, and F, how would you rate the local public schools on the job they are doing?

177- 1. A
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. F
7. Not asked
8. Don't know
9. Refused

/___/ 201 /___/___/___/ 202 203 204

Just a few background questions remain.

25. Are you currently working full-time or part-time outside the home?

205- 1. Yes--full-time
2. Yes--part-time
3. Yes--farmer
|
|
V

4. No
|
|
V
SKIP TO QS 27

26. What type of work do you usually do?

INTERVIEWER BE AS SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE

_____ /___/___/ 206 207

27. In what year were you born?

INTERVIEWER RECORD LAST TWO DIGITS

/___/___/ 208 209 87=Don't know/refused

28. What was the last grade in school you completed?

INTERVIEWER RECORD ACTUAL NUMBER OF YEARS

/___/___/ 210 211 98=Don't know
99=Refused

29. Including yourself, how many people over the age of 18 live in your household?

INTERVIEWER RECORD ACTUAL NUMBER

/___/ 212 8=8 or more
9=Don't know/refused

30. Finally, last year was your total family income before taxes over or under $20,000?

IF UNDER $20,000: Was it over or under $10,000?

IF UNDER $10,000: Was it over or under $5,000?

213- 1. Under $5,000
2. $5-$10,000

IF OVER $10,000: Was it over or under $15,000?

3. $10-$15,000
4. $15-$20,000

IF OVER $20,000: Was it over or under $30,000?

IF UNDER $30,000: Was it over or under $25,000?

5. $20-$25,000
6. $25-$30,000

IF OVER $30,000: Was it over or under $40,000?

7. $30-$40,000
8. Over $40,000
9. Don't know
0. Refused

That's all the questions I have for you today. Thank you very much for your time and help. Goodbye.

INTERVIEWER COMPLETE:

GENDER OF RESPONDENT: 1. Female
2. Male -214

TIME OF DAY OF INTERVIEW:
1. Morning
2. Afternoon
3. Evening -215

DAY OF MONTH OF INTERVIEW: /___/___/
216 217

TOTAL TIME OF INTERVIEW IN MINUTES: /___/___/
218 219

IN GENERAL, THE RESPONDENT'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE QUESTIONS WAS:

1. Excellent
2. Good
3. Fair
4. Poor -220

APPENDIX B

Responses to Open-Ended Questions

Responses to Question 19, KSBA Survey

Listed below are comments that people gave to the following question: What is the best thing you can think of about your local school board? They are listed by categories, which were derived by finding common themes among the answers given. The categories are underlined; the number to the right indicates the number of people who made comments that fit into that particular category. Below each category are listed abbreviated versions of the actual comments. The number to the left is the assigned number, given by UK-Survey Research Center. The number to the right indicates the number of people who gave each answer.

	Comment	# Respondents who Mention
Doing pretty good job; people who try; who are concerned		108
01	concerned	4
04	Doing the best they can; doing good job	46
14	nice people; concerned	5
15	show interest in what they're doing	1
16	try to work for children	7
25	try to get things done for schools	14
26	they care; put in lots of time/effort	10
27	willing to work with people	4
33	Keep the schools going	4
36	Doing a good job; could improve	12
39	the time they put in	1
Personal comments about members		25
05	outstanding people	1
07	I respect them	5
17	good relationship	1
19	some are Christians	1
29	they get along	6
34	Mostly well-educated; well-qualified	11
Specific improvement or service mentioned		22
02	helped with problems	3
13	sports well-supported	1
18	kindergarten	1
21	provide school buses	1
22	strict policy on drugs	2
23	work program for certain grades	1
32	well-maintained bldgs.	2
44	extra-curricular	2
49	support the band	1
50	maintain order and equivalence in schools	1
51	wide choices in schools	2
52	testing program	1
53	kept birth control out of schools	1
55	better test scores	1
58	vocational ed.	1
59	facilities	1

Teacher/staff-related			22
03	salaries have gone up	1	
06	good control over administration	1	
09	way teachers hired	2	
10	provide good teachers; education	13	
31	stand behind their people	1	
47	improving staff's education	1	
54	local autonomy	1	
61	cooperate with teachers	1	
62	keep an eye on superintendent	1	
Responsive to community			20
20	respond to comm; representative	8	
35	Accessible	7	
57	active	1	
30	they are open in meetings	4	
Keep public informed			8
08	informed of child progress	1	
11	info to press	1	
12	keep public informed	6	
Other			17
23,38,48,95		7	
41	Make the most of the budget--little waste	2	
43	long-range planning	2	
46	handle budget well	1	
56	thorough, careful, well-organized	4	
60	keep students interested	1	
Nothing good			29
00	Nothing	23	
28	take politics out	1	
37	have plenty of schools; building new one	3	
40	they need to be more open to public	1	
42	nothing	1	
98	Don't know		172

Responses to Question 20, KSBA Survey

Question 20 asked, "What is the worst thing you can think of about your local school board?"

Respondents gave a variety of answers to the question. Abbreviated forms of the comments are listed below. The underlined statements represent groupings or categories of comments. The numbers on the right indicate the number of people who made each comment or category of comments. The number to the left represents the number assigned to the comment by the UK Survey Research Center.

	Comment	# of Respondents Who Mention	
<u>Members not qualified; board is political</u>			63
03	People elected are not always qualified (also 18)	13	
07	They have stretched themselves too far	1	
12	not doing their job	4	
13	fighting among themselves	7	
14	not educators; not involved enough in school to really know the problems	6	
19	some members are too closed-minded	1	
30	lack of education themselves	2	
32	too political	17	
46	I'd like some insight into their motives	1	
48	don't cooperate with anyone	3	
49	should have variety of people; need new blood	2	
56	lack of experience	1	
61	elected for wrong reasons	3	
62	too conservative	1	
66	not enough power to implement ideas	1	
<u>Student-related improvements</u>			37
05	will not check for students' smoking, drugs, etc.	7	
09	student-teacher relationships nonexistent	1	
17	make students work too much	2	
21	don't inform parents and don't take action against teachers in discipline matters	2	
27	students need help on homework	1	
31	biased in treatment of students (also 40)	4	
33	graduating students who can't read/write	2	
34	not taking enough time with students	2	
41	lack of discipline in schools	9	
58	discipline problems on school bus	1	
67	need more concern for spec. ed. students	2	
68	punishments too severe	1	
70	punish students at own discretion--don't inform police	1	
72	attendance policy too strict	1	
76	not enough progs. for average and below ave.studs.	1	

Two-way communication with public; involvement			34
02	Need more publicity: more info to public	12	
10	Biased; don't listen to whole community	3	
23	don't get enough input from public on new bldgs	2	
24	not getting parents involved	4	
29	general communication not good with public	3	
37	secrecy: closed-door meetings	4	
38	they hide things and lie to the public	2	
43	seem so removed from community	1	
53	members not accessible	2	
59	public schools aren't visible; private schools have better p.r.	1	
Staff-related problems			20
15	problems with superintendent; crooked SOB	3	
22	hire teachers who are incompetent; afraid to fire	7	
26	public, not board, should elect superintendent	1	
42	give ass't super. too much power	6	
55	too many despots or hitlers	2	
64	salaries low	1	
Board-related problems			16
08	Just 1 or 2 people run the whole system	4	
47	should meet more frequently re: budget, curric.	1	
51	spend tax money too freely	3	
57	make rules and don't follow them	2	
60	skip meetings	3	
71	they want more money	1	
74	method of choosing board members	1	
77	they overreact in money situations	1	
Bad job overall; poor quality school system			12
11	not concerned about education; poor quality	4	
25	not running schools well enough	1	
28	need better planning	1	
39	product of schools is bad	1	
52	Kentucky ranks so low nationally	1	
63	don't check to make sure schools are well-kept	2	
75	do not have best interest of students as concern	2	
Curriculum-related improvements			9
06	Too much emphasis on sports and other activities	8	
50	Lack of sports for elementary and secondary children	1	
Redistricting/consolidation/closing			8
16	redistricting, etc.	4	
45	no busing	3	
65		1	

Other			11
04	Need new buses and school air conditioners	1	
20	other	1	
35	taking religion our of school	2	
36	take away parental authority	2	
54	too many snow days	2	
69	turned down a very good computer system	1	
73	schools allow tvs	1	
95	other	1	
Nothing			35
00	They are doing their best, etc.	33	
01	What they have to go through	1	
44	State and district policy interferes	1	
Don't Know			167
98		167	

Responses to Question 18, KSBA Survey

Question 18: What is the most important thing you think your local schools should be doing that they aren't doing now? Could you tell me a little more about that?

The categories listed below represent groupings of respondent answers to question 18. The original comments are referenced by number (as assigned to them by the UK Survey Research Center) under each category.

CATEGORY	Number who mentioned
Academic/Student-related: basic skills, more instruction; broader curriculum; teach how to think; demand more, etc. (01,10,11,13,18,20,32,42,43,45,46,50, 55,62,63,65,67,72)	72
Better teachers (06,33,38,51)	33
Problem/student-related:Drugs, sex, AIDS, counseling, etc. (02,03,15,35)	32
More information; community input; adult education (07,08,19,29,41)	29
Increase parent involvement (09,16,17,30,44,56)	29
Student-related: discipline, attendance (04,26,39,40,75)	26
More money; solve budget problems (22,54,57,59,69,71,76,80)	13
special education and gifted (27,60,68)	11
Career education (28)	8
No busing, redistricting, consolidation (14,24,47,74)	8
Put religion back in schools (25,36)	7
Take politics out (61,64)	3
Change nothing; everything's fine now (00)	22
Other (05,12,21,23,31,34,37,48,49,52,53,58, 66,70,73,77,78,79,81,82,83)	40
Don't Know	104
Not Asked/No answer	41

APPENDIX C

Dissemination of Survey Results

KENTUCKY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

RECEIVED
AEL

NOV 5 1987

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
President
Dr. Kenneth Crecelius
Monroe County
Vice President
Robert Greenwood
Oldham County
Past President
Mary Connor
Bowling Green
Directors-at-Large
Marion Bradford
Bardstown
Richard Gumming
Daviess
Allen Hale
Russell County
Jim Hiatt
Jefferson County
Ronnie Lowder Matthews
Christian County
Luther Mason
Scott County
Helen McCurdy
Daviess County
Barry Pennington
Fayette County
Eddie Sykes
Mason County
Charles J. Stamler
Ludlow
Ted Wagner
Bullitt County
Joe Waters
Jenkins
Regional Chairmen
Marge Akers
Somerset
Walter D. Black
Boyd County
Edward L. Blaine, Jr.
Beechwood
Dr. Kenneth Crecelius
Monroe County
Art Freeman
Hopkinsville
Marina Gentry
Bardstown
James R. Hanson
Shelby County
Charles Johnson
Lexington County
Randy Mynes
Webster County
Austin Robinson
Bell County
Roger C. Smith
Paducah
Gene Watts
Knox County

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
David L. Hawk
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
L. Francis Scott
DIRECTOR OF GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND BOARD MEMBER DEVELOPMENT
Lem D. Powers
ATTORNEY
J. Stephen Kelly
DIRECTOR OF INSURANCE PROGRAMS
John P. Scott
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
Ann Clayton Brandt
POLICY SYSTEM COORDINATOR
Lawrence W. Stamper
POLICY CONSULTANTS
Laura Easterling
Dora Sapp
Anne-Laure Bosch
Paul Schurz
SAFETY & LOSS CONTROL SPECIALIST
Robert W. Pugh
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Jan Prizzia

ADVISOR FOR EMPLOYEE RELATIONS
Robert Dunson

TO: News Media

FROM: Ann Clayton Brandt, Director of Communications acb

DATE: November 3, 1987

The Kentucky School Boards Association will hold a news conference on Monday, November 9, 11:00 a.m. in Conference Room-B at the Fayette County Schools Administration Building, 701 E. Main Street in Lexington.

The topic of the news conference will be results of the statewide telephone survey on public schools and school boards conducted for KSBA by the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center.

Englewood Office Park, Route 3, Box 96A ☐ Frankfort, Kentucky 40601 ☐ (502) 695-4630, TOLL FREE 1-800-372-2962

KENTUCKY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

NEWS RELEASE

Kentucky School Boards Association
Englewood Office Park
Rt. 3, Box 96A
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

CONTACT: Ann Clayton Brandt
PHONE: (502) 695-4630, TOLL FREE 1-800-372-2962
FOR RELEASE: November 9, 1987 (11:00 a.m.)

HIGHLIGHTS OF KSBA SURVEY ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL BOARDS

In a statewide survey on public schools and school boards, most Kentuckians (70%) would like to see local school boards have more influence in decision making than they have now. Of those polled, six percent feel school boards should have the same amount of control as they do now, while 14% feel local boards should have less influence than state or federal government.

Of those surveyed, 75 percent said they had never received any information or communication from their local school board. Most people (nearly 75%) said they get their information about actions of their local school boards from the news media.

According to the survey results, 48% said they had voted in school board elections last fall. Among reasons they gave for not voting were: not being registered; not interested; not having children in school; or not having enough information.

Among those voting, the age group with the highest proportion of school-age children (25-40) were not more likely to have voted. A breakdown on voting shows a higher percent of those age 41 and over voted:

Age 41-65	63.3% voted
Over 65	51.3% voted
25-40	44.4% voted
24 and under	17.8% voted

-more-

Consistent with a Bluegrass State Poll in the Louisville area reported in The Courier Journal in August, the most positive ratings about public schools came from parents with children in public schools and from people without a college education.

In the KSBA poll, there also was a tendency for older respondents to express more trust in their local school boards and to give their local schools a higher grade. Females were more likely to give the schools an "A", while males were more likely to give them a "B".

The random telephone survey was conducted in July for the Kentucky School Boards Association by the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center. The telephone interviewers were trained and supervised. The margin of error for the survey was plus or minus 4.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval. This means that results should not vary more than 4.5 percentage points in 95 out of 100 administrations of the survey.

The survey represents a cross section of the state. The five main regions represented include Appalachia, Bluegrass, Northern Kentucky, Louisville and contiguous counties and Western Kentucky. Adults (over 18) from urban and rural areas, male and female, working and not working, and with a range of educational experience were interviewed. Parents of school-age children as well as those without children in school were polled. Of the 473 respondents, 54% were female and 46% were male. Most (70%) were lifetime residents of Kentucky. About 2/3 of the respondents live in rural communities or small towns.

###

KENTUCKY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

NEWS RELEASE

Kentucky School Boards Association
Englewood Office Park
Rt. 3, Box 96A
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

CONTACT: Ann Clayton Brandt
PHONE: (502) 695-4630, TOLL FREE 1-800-372-2962
FOR RELEASE: November 9 (11:00 a.m.)

KSBA RESPONSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON STATEWIDE SURVEY

The Kentucky School Boards Association conducted a statewide telephone poll last summer to find out the public's perceptions about the role of the local school board and the jobs their schools and school boards are doing.

Three major needs addressed in the survey are:

* local control of public schools
* the need for more information to the public from their school boards
* getting parents involved in voting in school board elections.

LOCAL CONTROL OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"We think it is significant that 70% of those surveyed would like to see local school boards have more influence in making decisions about the public schools," said Tim Holt, a Jessamine County school board member who was involved in the survey project.

"This supports a nationwide survey on school boards released last year by the Institute for Educational Leadership which found 'that the American public strongly supports the concept of local governance of education through the school boards'", he added.

"Since decisions made about public schools can have an impact on the total community, we believe it is important to involve local citizens in the process through the school board," Holt explained.

IMPROVE PUBLIC INFORMATION FROM SCHOOL BOARDS

According to the survey results, Kentuckians need more and better communications from their local school board.

Seventy-five percent of those surveyed said they had never received any type of information or communication from their local school boards. Most of them (74%) said they get their information about actions of their local school boards from the news media.

In a related question, almost 85% rated as "very important" the school board's responsibility to keep the community informed.

To help local school boards in these efforts, KSBA has designed a statewide model community relations program. The program offers suggestions for school boards to use in working with the community, the news media and the schools (including teachers, staff, students and parents).

Sixty-three local school boards have enrolled in the program in its first year of implementation in 1987.

"Board members cited community relations as a need in a membership survey two years ago," explained Tim Holt.

"This survey reinforces that need. Local school boards should not rely on the news media alone to tell their story," he said.

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PARENT INVOLVEMENT WITH SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL BOARDS

Of those adults between the ages of 25-40, only 44.4% said they voted in school board elections last fall. "Since this is the average age group for parents of school-age children, we want to address this need identified by the survey," said Tim Holt.

"All of the research available nationally has shown that when parents and communities are involved in the schools, the schools are better as a result," Holt added.

KSBA has developed a slide-tape presentation on the role and responsibilities of school board members. Last fall, it was presented to 30 community organizations throughout the state, reaching more than 1,000 citizens. The presentation was designed to encourage citizens to learn more about their school board and to help them make better informed decisions when voting for school board members.

Prior to school board elections next fall, KSBA will aim this presentation at more parent groups to help get them interested in the process.

KSBA will present the findings of the survey to school board members and school superintendents throughout Kentucky. The Association also plans to make the information available to members of the General Assembly and to concerned citizen groups.

"We feel that this information will be valuable to various groups interested in improving the public schools in Kentucky," said Holt.

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Greater clout for school boards favored

By Mary Ann Roser
Herald-Leader education writer

A public opinion survey released yesterday shows that most Kentuckians do not vote in school board races, attend board meetings or receive any communication from their board members.

But despite the lack of public involvement, an overwhelming majority — 70 percent of respondents — want local boards to have more decision-making authority, the survey said.

The survey was commissioned by the Kentucky School Boards Association, and results were released at a Lexington news conference.

David Keller, the executive director of the association, said he hoped the survey would influence Kentucky lawmakers and discourage them from chipping away at the authority of local boards.

The fact that 70 percent of the 473 respondents said local boards should have more influence in decision-making and only 14 percent said they should have less is a strong statement for "local control," Keller said.

"In general, we've seen more and more decisions made at the state level," he said. "We believe local control is the key to better schools."

Asked what decisions should be returned to local boards, Keller said he was not referring to anything specific. Rather, the association wants to "hang on to what we've got."

He said the association was not "embarking on any crusade to take authority away from the state."

Robert Sexton, the executive director of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, said the results were not surprising.

"Historically, schools have been locally run, and people have a sense of ownership of their schools," Sexton said. The survey's findings "capture a sentiment and the need for really aggressive citizen involvement in schools."

But the survey shows that citizen involvement is low.

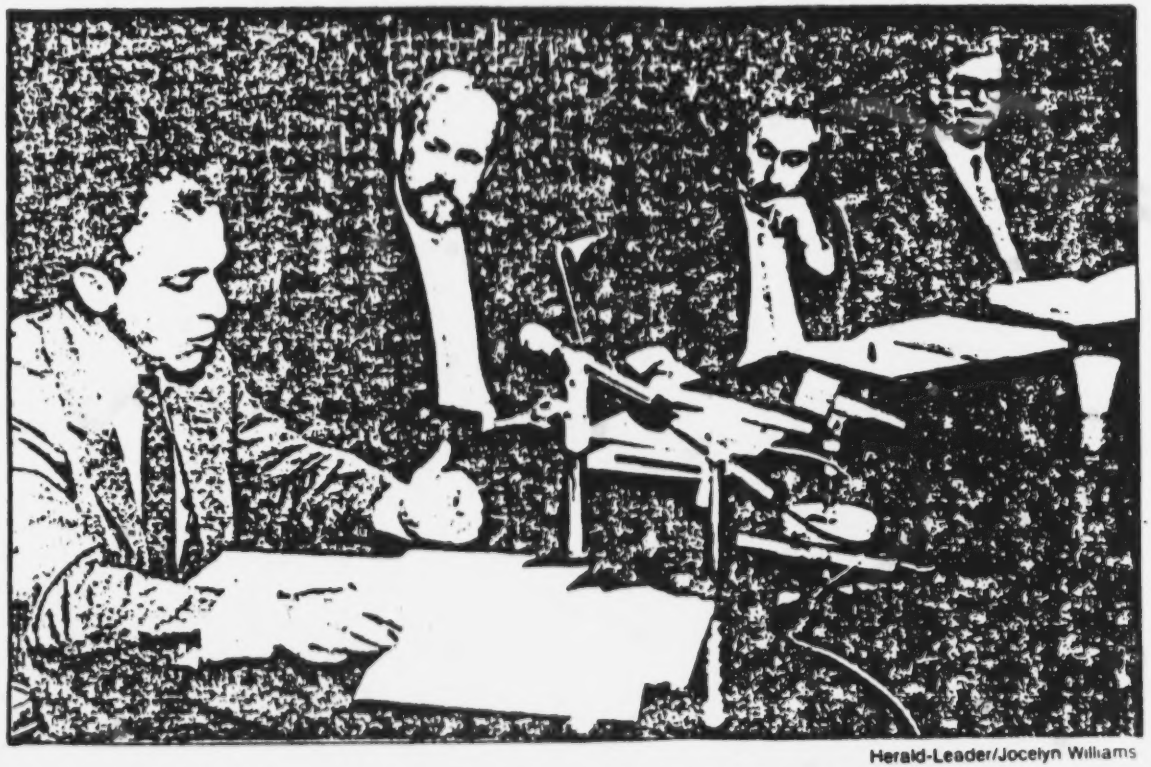
Forty-eight percent of respondents said they had voted in school board elections last fall, 75 percent said they had never received any information directly from their local boards, and 74 percent said they got school information from the news media.

When respondents were asked what they liked least about their school board, the most common answer was that the board was too political. Still, only 4 percent gave that answer. Three percent gave the second-most common answer, that the board members were not qualified.

At the same time, 62.8 percent had high levels of confidence in their board members, 67.6 percent said they were satisfied with their board, and 59 percent thought board members should be paid.

The Appalachian Education Laboratory in Charleston, W.Va., assisted with the survey, and the Survey Research Center of the University of Kentucky conducted the telephone interviews in July.

James Hougland, the director of the UK center, said researchers were 95 percent certain the margin of error would not vary more than 4.5 percentage points.



Herald-Leader/Jocelyn Williams

From left, Tim Holt of Jessamine school board, David Keller of school boards association, Jim Henson of Shelby board and James Hougland of UK survey center

Poll finds public backs more local control of schools

By CAROL MARIE CROPPER
Staff Writer

LEXINGTON, Ky. — Despite state and national trends to shift control of schools away from local boards, the public wants more local control, according to a poll released yesterday by the Kentucky School Boards Association.

In Kentucky — where some local boards have been accused of patronage and politicking — 70 percent of those responding to the poll said they want their local school boards to have more influence. Almost 63 percent of those polled said they have either high or very high trust in their local board.

Kentuckians expressed such confidence even though 72 percent said they have never attended a local board meeting and 74 percent said they have never received information from their board. Almost half of those responding said they did not vote in the last local school board race.

Similar low voter turnout is common for other elections, and people don't tend to go to meetings of other governmental bodies either, spokesmen for the association said.

But, they said, making board members aware of the lack of citizen involvement might encourage them to reach out and communicate more with parents. The association began a program in February to help local boards involve their community and work with the media, said Ann Clayton Brandt, director of communications for the association.

The poll involved random telephone interviews with 473 Kentucky residents age 18 and over, the association said. The poll has a margin of error of 4.5 percent, said James G. Hougland Jr., director of the University of Kentucky's survey research center.

David L. Keller, executive director of the school board association, said his organization hopes the findings will temper the thinking of legislators, who begin a 60-day session in January.

The association is not seeking a major shift in the balance of state and local power, he said. "We are not trying to turn the clock back, or say that local boards ought to run everything," he said. "We need to look here and hold on to what we've got."

In the past 10 years, legislatures have passed many laws affecting local schools, including limits on classroom size and on property tax rates.

Other laws have made it easier for state education officials to assume direct control of troubled local districts.

Local boards have come under fire recently, Keller said, and, "It's tempting just to say, 'We won't let them make the deci-

THE COURIER-JOURNAL
LOUISVILLE, KY.
TUESDAY,
NOVEMBER 10, 1987

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Poll finds public backs local control of schools

Continued from Page B 1

sions — we'll make them in Frankfort.'"

But, he said, parents have the most influence dealing with local school boards. "The less authority the local board has, the less difference it makes whether you've got active and involved citizens."

While Keller indicated that the association won't pressure legislators for major changes in the control local boards now have, he did say it will support giving boards more flexibility in setting property-tax rates.

On the other hand, he said, the association is considering recommending legislation that would bar from school boards people who offer jobs in the school system as a reward for votes.

Asked about the criticisms of patronage and politics by local boards, Keller said, "I think we've got 178 local school districts, and I think we've got certainly less than 10 percent where it is a problem."

Less than 4 percent of those polled cited being "too political" as a criticism of their local boards — although that was the most frequent criticism cited in the open-ended question.

"Not qualified" and "need publicity" tied for second place among the criticisms, at 2.5 percent.

Other poll results:

- 68 percent said they were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the job their local boards were doing.
- 68 percent said there should be stricter qualifications for board members.
- 90 percent said they feel welcome to visit local schools.
- 96 percent said they consider more involvement of parents in schools very important or somewhat important.

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KENTUCKY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

November 9, 1987

TO: David Keller

FROM: Ann Brandt

RE: News Conference on Survey

The following news organizations were represented at our news conference in Lexington:

The Courier Journal
The Lexington Herald-Leader
The Kentucky Post
WAVE-TV Louisville
WKYT-TV (27) Lexington
WLEX-TV (18) Lexington
WTVQ-TV (36) Lexington
WVLK Radio-Lexington
WLAP Radio-Lexington

Two radio stations did telephone interviews:

Kentucky Network
WEKU-FM (Richmond)

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Ronald Gunning
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Artes Hale
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Jefferson County
Fannie Louise Maddux
Christian County
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Daviess County
Barth Pemberton
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Anne-Laure Beach
Fred Schultz
SAFETY & LOSS CONTROL SPECIALIST
Robert M. Purcell
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Jan Frazee

ADVISOR FOR EMPLOYEE RELATIONS
Robert Duncan

December 1, 1987

DEC 7 1987

TO: David Keller

FROM: Ann Brandt

RE: News Coverage of Survey

In addition to news coverage in The Courier Journal, Lexington Herald, Kentucky Post and on WAVE-TV, WKYT-TV, WLEX-TV, WTVQ, WVLK Radio, WLAP Radio, WEKU Radio and the Kentucky Network, articles on our statewide survey were carried in the following newspapers across the state:

Harlan Daily Enterprise
Paintsville Herald
Richmond Daily Register
Murray Ledger & Times
Paducah Sun
Maysville Ledger Independent
Somerset Commonwealth-Journal
Henderson Gleaner
Falmouth Outlook
Spencer Magnet
Corbin Times-Tribune
Frankfort State Journal
Bowling Green Daily News
Kentucky New Era-Hopkinsville
Middlesboro Daily News
Fulton Daily Leader

It was also carried in School Board News published by the National School Boards Association and the Williamson, West Virginia Daily News.

cc: Beth Sattes, AEL
James G. Hougland, UKSRC
Bill Braden

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KENTUCKY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

REPORTER

DR. WARREN FOLEYFOOT, President
DAVID L. KELLER, Executive Director
ANN CLAYTON BRANDT, Editor

Volume XVII, No.23
December 1, 1987

KSBA STATEWIDE SURVEY GIVES OPINIONS ON PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS

The Kentucky School Boards Association conducted a statewide telephone poll last summer to find out the public's perceptions about the role of the local school board and the jobs their schools and school boards are doing.

Three major needs addressed in the survey are:

*keeping decision-making at the local level;

*getting more information to the public from their school boards; and

*getting parents involved in voting in school board elections.

LOCAL DECISION-MAKING

"We think it is significant that 70% of those surveyed would like to see local school boards have more influence in making decisions about the public schools," said Tim Holt, a Jessamine County school board member who was involved in the survey project.

"This supports a nationwide survey on school boards released last year by the Institute for Educational Leadership which found 'that the American public strongly supports the concept of local governance of education through the school boards'", he added.

"Since decisions about public schools can have an impact on the total community, we believe it is important to involve local citizens in the process through the local school board," Holt explained.

IMPROVE PUBLIC INFORMATION FROM SCHOOLS

According to the survey results, Kentuckians need more and better communications from their local school board.

70% of Kentuckians polled want more local influence in making decisions about public schools.

Seventy-five percent of those surveyed said they had never received any type of information or communication from their local school boards. Most of them (74%) said they get their information about actions of their local school boards from the news media.

In a related question, almost 85% rated as "very important" the school board's responsibility to keep the community informed.

To help local school boards in these efforts, KSBA has designed a statewide model community relations program. The program offers suggestions for school boards to use in working with the community, the news media and the schools (including teachers, staff, students and parents). Sixty-three local school boards have enrolled in the program in its first year of implementation in 1987.

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"Since the average age group for parents of school-age children (25-40) is not voting, we want to address this need identified by the survey," said Tim Holt.

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KSBA has developed a slide-tape presentation on the role and responsibilities of school board members. Last fall, it was presented to 30 community organizations throughout the state, reaching more than 1,000 citizens. The presentation was designed to encourage citizens to learn more about their school board and to help them make better informed decisions when voting for school board members.

Prior to school board elections next fall, KSBA will aim this presentation at more parent groups to help interest them in the process. Of those adults between the ages of 25-40, only 44.4% said they voted in school board elections last fall. A breakdown on voting shows a higher percentage of those age 41 and over voted:

Age 41-65	63.3% voted
Over 65	51.3% voted
25-40	44.4% voted
24 and under	17.8% voted

The random telephone survey was conducted in July for the Kentucky School Boards Association by the University of Kentucky Survey Research Center. The telephone interviewers were trained and supervised. The margin of error for the survey was plus or minus 4.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence interval. This means that results should not vary more than 4.5 percentage points in 95 out of 100 administrations of the survey.

The survey represents a cross section of the state. The five main regions represented include Appalachia, Bluegrass, Northern Kentucky, Louisville and contiguous counties and Western Kentucky. Adults (over 18) from urban and rural areas, male and female, working and not working, and with a range of educational experience were interviewed. Most of the questions on the survey asked people their opinions about local school boards. Here are some of them:

Less than half (48%) report that they voted in the last school board election race. People gave many reasons for not having voted, including the following:

19.2%	not registered to vote
12.0%	not interested
7.7%	no children in school
6.0%	too busy

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4.7% not enough information about the race
40.6% other
9.8% don't know

People report being satisfied with the job their local school boards are doing. Nearly two-thirds are either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. The responses were as follows:

19.5% very satisfied
48.1% somewhat satisfied
14.2% somewhat dissatisfied
8.3% very dissatisfied
10.0% don't know

In a similar question, people reported they have high trust and confidence in their local school boards. They describe their level of trust as follows:

15.0% very high
47.8% high
17.5% low
7.2% very low
1.9% not high, not low
10.6% don't know

ADMINISTRATIVE VACANCIES

The Campbellsville Board of Education is accepting applications for Superintendent of the Campbellsville Independent Schools until January 15, 1988. Contract date will begin July 1, 1988. The candidate must have Kentucky Superintendent Certification and experience as a superintendent or assistant superintendent. Interested persons should send a letter of application and complete resume and credentials to: David W. Fryrear, Superintendent, Campbellsville Board of Education, 136 South Columbia Avenue., Campbellsville, KY 42718. Length of contract and salary negotiable.

The Fayette County Board of Education is accepting applications for principal for the new elementary school on Squires Road scheduled to open at the beginning of the 1988-89 school year. Applications for this position will be received by the Fayette Co. Public Schools no later than 4:30 p.m. (EST) Friday, December 18, 1987. Qualified persons interested in applying for this position must submit a letter of application to Mr. Thomas E. Mahanes, Division of Personnel Services, Fayette Co. Public Schools, 701 East Main Street, Lexington, KY 40502-1699. The letter of application must include essential information regarding training/degrees, professional work experience, names/addresses of at least three current references, and current address/telephone number. Additionally, a statement of philosophy or vision for opening a new elementary school in areas such as program development, parent involvement and selecting staff must be submitted with the letter of application.

The Harlan County Board of Education is accepting applications for superintendent of the Harlan Co. Schools until December 31, 1987. Request applications from Board Secretary Ron Cole at: Harlan Co. Board of Education, Mounted Route #1, Harlan, KY 40831 or by calling 606-573-4330. Applications are to be turned into the Board Secretary at the same address. Salary and length of contract will be negotiated with the successful applicant.

The Oldham County Board of Education is receiving applications until December 18, 1987, for the position of high school principal. Interested persons may request an application from Robert Arvin, Superintendent, Oldham Co. Schools, P.O. Box 207, LaGrange, KY 40031, no later than December 10, 1987.

The Kentucky Department of Education is accepting applications for Deputy Superintendent for Elementary, Middle and Secondary Education (Curriculum and Instruction). The Deputy Superintendent supervises 180 professional employees and reports directly to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Qualifications include: working knowledge of current research in curriculum and instruction; administrative experience; public school experience; and doctorate in education preferred. Salary competitive and negotiable. Application: Send letter of application, vita, and names, addresses and phone numbers of five references to: Search Committee, Deputy Superintendent for Elementary, Middle and Secondary Education, Kentucky Department of Education, First Floor, Capital Plaza Tower, Frankfort, KY 40601. All applications must be received by January 15, 1988. Work will begin March 1, 1988, or as soon as possible thereafter.

KENTUCKY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

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